

Questions from Technology Readiness Webinar, 11/17/2016

Will Chromebooks work with Smarter Balanced Assessments?

Yes. SBAC reports great success with Chromebooks and the Chrome OS.

When will a vendor be chosen?

Currently the timeline is to release the RFP before end-of-year with a final decision in Spring 2017. At that time we will share out as much information as we can regarding technology requirements.

Why are we required to use keyboards?

There are a number of reasons SBAC recommends keyboards, primary of which is ease of use for students. Every student grades 3-11 will be assessed using a performance-based question that requires a typed response. SBAC determined that the 10 inch tablet is capable of showing enough screen content as long as the touch keyboard is disabled; otherwise students often had to finger scroll to see all of the required information on the page. The State supports this stance in an effort to guarantee the best assessment environment for all students.

Update: *The Smarter Balanced Assessment Technology Readiness Coordinator clarified the reason for the keyboard requirement: "Our reason for requiring a physical keyboard is because the on-screen keyboard obscures a large part of the screen. When answering long-write questions in which the student is expected to reference source text, reducing the available screen space places students at a disadvantage."*

Will Flash or Java be a requirement?

At this time we do not know as it will depend on the vendor. It is our hope that HTML5 will be the primary vehicle.

Update: *The Smarter Balanced Assessment Technology Readiness Coordinator did point out that with Chromebook support none of the vendors were using Java/Flash for the assessment interface. He did emphasize that many use server-side Java scripting that should not create issues for any of the operating systems/browsers.*

Does Microsoft's RDP client work?

Our understanding is that thin client solutions should work as long as the end-user has appropriate rights for applications (secure browser was mentioned as an example).

How do we know what OS versions will work?

The Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium website has a [requirements document](#) available. The DE will also post the latest information they have from other districts, vendor, or SBAC through the [Iowa Core Smarter Balanced website](#).

Is the Smarter Balanced Assessment compatible with SIM?

There is not a SIF requirement in the RFP other than the State expressed it as a desirable option. The complete RFP is available online on the [Iowa Department of Administrative Services website](#). Section 4.16 discusses Functional and Technical Requirements for Online Assessment

System. Section 4.2.7 describes the Technology Readiness expectations include SIF integration.

What will students who need an alternative assessment use?

For next year at least the DLM will still be used statewide.

If we use MAPS testing will the Smarter Balanced Assessment work for us as well?

Though we cannot speak to that authoritatively, there is a good chance that is correct. We will know more once a vendor has been selected.

There are concerns about load issues. How will the State address this?

The DE took steps to provide load balancing for some systems. Smarter Balanced Assessment will actually be hosted by the vendor and will be responsible for the connection continuity. California currently uses Smarter Balanced Assessment and has reported no issues other than minor district-level problems. We do not anticipate this to be a problem, however as with any technology there is no guarantee that there will not be some issues.

What grade levels will be tested using Smarter Balanced Assessment?

Grades 3-11 are assessed next year.

Is there a domain that will need to be added to the Google Management console for Chromebooks. When will that be available for testing?

Once a vendor is selected in the Spring 2017 the DE will provide as much testing information as possible as soon as possible.

Will there be a rolling test window for districts to avoid overload?

There is a mandated 12-week window for testing. Districts have the discretion to test any grade level any time during the window as long as all assessments are completed during the window. Since California with over 6 million students has tested successfully with the same window we feel this will not be an issue.

Why do we have to avoid updates to operating systems during the testing window?

This is a district decision, not a mandate. Other states indicated to our team that updates should be applied after the testing window as some districts experienced issues after an applied security update. We feel this is a best practice but we also understand this is a local decision. We are just conveying the information we received from other districts' experience.

Is this secure browser a separate program similar to the lockdown browser for MAP testing? If so, is there an .msi file available for deployment in an Active Directory environment?

Our understanding is that there is a separate program for the secure browser however this will be dependent on the selected vendor. We cannot guarantee an .msi file is available but it is likely there will be one.

Will the state's bandwidth be able to handle the anticipated load?

The State will have very little to do with the bandwidth as the vendor will be hosting the assessment interface. The RFP addresses this concern.

With MAP testing and 1-to-1 Chromebooks, we were given URL blacklists and whitelists and specific directions to setup a secure browser. Will this happen with Smarter Balanced Assessment?

This will be something the selected vendor will provide if needed.

It was put out by our superintendent that instead of the current 45 minute estimate per test, that it could be 4 hours per test per student. Is this accurate?

Here are a few thoughts. Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium has provided estimates for the average testing time for each portion of the assessment. ELA and Math each have two sections: one is mostly multiple choice and/or drag-and-drop. The second is what they call performance and involves the student answering an open-ended question that requires a typed paragraph or paragraphs. Each section can last up to two hours but a majority of students will not need this long. Students are not time-limited either; if the student cannot complete the test in one session, they can return at a later time and pick up where they left off.

Are the tech skills required by the students listed anywhere?

A rubric has been released to Instructional Strategists throughout the State. The document is also available on the State's [Smarter Balanced Assessment website](#).

Can second graders test as well?

The State will not provide this at this time.

Will high school students need headphones as well?

Currently we are told that headphones/earbuds are a requirement for all grade levels.